

Scholastic Lesson Plan

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Lesson Plan

Immigration Lesson Plan for Grades 3-5

A lesson plan to help students compare and contrast the stories of immigrants from decades ago to those of recent immigrants. This lesson plan also compares the differences between immigrants' experiences at Ellis Island and Angel Island.

Overview

The focus for students in this age group is on comparing different immigration experiences. Students will compare and contrast the stories of immigrants arriving in the past to recent immigrants. They will also analyze the differences between immigrants arriving through Ellis Island versus Angel Island.

Objective

Students will:

1. Use Web technology to access immigration history
2. Develop an understanding of the concept of immigration
3. Develop oral history writing skills, including note-taking and conducting an interview
4. Read for detail
5. Use real-world examples as models for writing an oral history
6. Compare and contrast immigration stories of the past with the present
7. Compare and contrast immigration through Ellis Island and Angel Island
8. Use technology to explore a historical place and event
9. Use graphs and facts to respond to several research-based questions and activities

Materials

1. [Immigration: Stories of Yesterday and Today Activities](#)
2. [KWL Chart](#) (PDF)

Set Up and Prepare

1. Depending on the grade level and maturity level of each class, activities can be facilitated as independent work, collaborative group work, or whole class instruction.
2. If a computer is available for each student, guide students to the activities either through printed URLs on handouts or on the board.
3. If you are working in a lab, set up the computers to be on the desired website as students walk into class. If there are fewer computers than students, group the students by reading level. Assign each student a role: a "driver" who navigates the web, a timer who keeps the group on task, and a note taker. If there are more than three students per computer, you can add roles like a team leader, a team reporter, etc.
4. If you are working in a learning station in your classroom, break out your class into different groups. Have rotating groups working on the computer (s), reading printed background information, holding smaller group discussions, writing first drafts of their scrapbook, etc. Details described further in the Teaching sections.
5. You may also want to create a special display for your classroom library in honor of Immigration. Check out the unit booklist for suggested print materials. Be sure to keep a shelf available for students' oral history scrapbooks!

Activity 1: [Ellis Island Interactive Tour](#). 1 to 2 days.

Explain to students that everyone living in the United States has an immigrant past, with the exception of Native Americans. Over the last few centuries, millions of people have made their way to America. Some people, like slaves, came unwillingly. But most immigrants were drawn by the promise of greater freedom and opportunity.

Write the word "immigration" on the board, as well as its definition. Give students various examples of immigration. Use personal stories if possible. Invite students to share their own examples, ideas, or questions about immigration. Allow students to share information about their own families' countries of origin and write all responses on the board.

Discuss events in U.S. history and world history that are related to immigration. List these on the chalkboard.

Write "Ellis Island," on the board and explain how it is an important part of the history of American immigration.

Find Ellis Island on a map of the New York City area and display the map in the classroom. Invite students to take the interactive tour of [Ellis Island](#). Hand out the [KWL Graphic Organizer](#) (PDF), and have students fill it out. Then during classroom discussion, have your students create a list of things that they want to find out.

Ask students to write down at least two new questions they have about Ellis Island. As a class, brainstorm ways students might answer their own questions.

Activity 2: [Relive a Boy's Journey](#). 1 to 2 days.

Tell your students that they are going to learn about a young immigrant who came through Ellis Island. Introduce the [story of Seymour Rechtzeit](#). Provide time for your students to read Seymour's story on their own or in pairs at the computer. You may wish to print out a copy of the story for individual reading. Ask students to recall the reasons Seymour came to the United States. Have students continue with their KWL Graphic Organizer to gather more information on Ellis Island and the immigrant experience.

Activity 3: [Angel Island: Meet Li Keng Wong](#). 1 to 2 days.

As a comparison to Ellis Island, introduce the Angel Island experience of Chinese immigrant, Li Keng Wong.

Have students read Li Keng Wong's story, individually or in small groups, and continue to fill out their KWL Graphic Organizer. You may wish to print out a copy of the story for individual reading. Encourage students to think about the questions at the end of each chapter of Li Keng Wong's story.

When you come back as a class, see if any of the questions have been answered and if more have been added. Have a compare and contrast session between Angel Island and Ellis Island.

Activity 4: [Meet Young Immigrants](#). 1 day.

Ask your students to find out the year Ellis Island closed. (Answer: 1954). Point out that although that immigration station is closed, hundreds of thousands of immigrants continue coming into the country each year. Then ask students to read [the stories of the recent immigrants](#). As a class, discuss the differences between their stories and the stories of Seymour Rechtzeit and Li Keng Wong. Have them note any important comparisons on their KWL charts.

Activity 5: [Explore Immigration Data](#). 2 days.

Look over the various [charts, graphs, and tables](#) with your students. Ask volunteers to describe the kind of information each one is showing. Ask them about ways they could use the data.

Ask your students to compare a table with a chart or graph that shows the same information. How are they similar and different? Have students state the advantages and disadvantages to using each one.

Divide the class into small groups and assign each group one of the questions or projects (listed beneath the tables, charts, and graphs). Have them work independently to answer the question or complete the project. Discuss their findings as a class.

Have each small group reform, and then ask each group to compose three questions to challenge another group. Have the groups swap questions and write down their answers. Discuss their findings as a class.

Activity 6: Oral Histories. 4 to 5 days (with additional time to set up interviews).

In the first week of immigration studies, tell students that they will be recording and writing the oral history of someone who immigrated to the United States. Encourage them to start thinking about a subject for their oral history. As needed, help students find individuals to interview. Schedule a field trip to a nursing home, literacy center, or other location where students can meet immigrants and conduct their interview, or assign the actual interviewing as out-of-class homework.

Listen to the oral histories within the [Ellis Island interactive tour](#). (Click the "audio" tabs within the stops of the tour to access the oral histories). Then have your students watch the videos in the [Meet the Young Immigrants](#) section. Ask students to think about what makes a good oral history. Write their responses on the board. This will provide students with a list of things to think about when working on their project.

Prewriting. Students should begin working on their interview questions before their interview. Have them look at their filled out KWL Graphic Organizer to help them come up with questions. Have students submit their questions for approval.

Drafting. Discuss effective ways for students to write their immigrant oral histories. For example, they might use the first-person voice, letting the immigrants tell their own tales. Have them read the [stories in the Meet the Young Immigrants](#) section.

Revising and Editing. Have students share a draft of their oral history with a classmate for feedback. What questions did the reader raise? What information is missing that needs to be included? How could the story be stronger?

After all the steps are completed, have the students submit their stories to you. After giving them feedback, let them have time to make final edits. Post their final stories in the classroom or on the class webpage.

Lesson Extensions

Create a Class Quilt

Celebrate your students' cultural backgrounds with a class quilt. Distribute 8-inch squares of white or light-colored construction paper. Using markers or collage materials, have students create an image on their square that represents their family culture. Encourage students to use diverse materials, such as photographs or recipes. Reinforce the squares with cardboard if necessary. When all the squares are ready, use a hole punch to make holes around the edges. Lace the quilt panels together with yarn. Display the finished quilt and invite students to explain their panel to the class.

Classroom Geography

Use this activity to visually identify connections students have to other countries in the world. Display a large map of the world. Have students draw self-portraits or bring in photos of themselves. Place the pictures around the border of the map. Have each student stretch a piece of

yarn from his or her picture to a country or region where his or her ancestors lived, and secure it with push pins. You may want to color code the yarn by country, continent, or world region. Take time to discuss the finished map.

Hall of Fame

Invite the class to create a Hall of Fame of immigrants who have made important contributions. Guide students to search for biographies of the individuals using reference materials from the library or from online sources. For their Hall of Fame submission, each student should provide a photograph or other likeness of the person, as well as her birthplace, the date she came to America, and why she came. Another paragraph should explain her accomplishments.

Music From Around the World

Work with students to investigate examples of music and literature from other lands that have influenced American writing and music.

More discussion questions:

- What is the definition of immigration? What are some reasons people immigrate?
- Why is America a popular destination for immigrants?
- How has America changed as a result of immigration?
- What are the differences between immigrate, emigrate and migrate?
- What are some of the obstacles that an immigrant faces?
- Who were some famous immigrants that made important contributions to America?
- What were some different experiences for immigrants who came through Ellis Island versus Angel Island?
- What are some of the differences that immigrants faced in the past compared with immigrants today?